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Writing Under Pressure: Maud Cruttwell and the Old Master Monograph

Francesco Ventrella

Connoisseurship and the old master monograph

Writing about Florence around 1900, the painter William Rothenstein (1872–1945) described the city as a scholarly combat ground in which the Guelphs and the Ghibellines had been replaced by international ‘cognoscenti’:

There were armed camps and fierce rivalries in Florence then, as in past times; but the fighting was far less bloody, concerned as it was with attributions rather than with Ducal thrones. Berenson, Horne, Loeser, Vernon Lee, Maud Cruttwell, all had their mercenaries — and their artillery.¹

While this passage delivers an amusing anecdote about competing groups of art historians abroad, it also poses a historiographical question, which should be considered more carefully. Unlike many art historiographers of our time, Rothenstein naturally includes both men *and* women to illustrate the feuds of scholarship in the foreign colony of Florence. The inclusion of Vernon Lee (1856–1935) and Maud Cruttwell (1860–1939) among Bernard Berenson (1865–1959), Herbert Horne (1864–1916), and Charles Loeser (1864–1928) demonstrates that, in spite of there being an internal rivalry, these individuals belonged to the same professional network.

The story of how women art historians have fallen off the map of art historiography is a complicated one, which many feminist scholars have recently started to disentangle. The professionalization of art history at the end of the nineteenth century was a project that has been told mostly through the universalizing narrative of modernity, which canonizes the history of the discipline through national and institutional networks

¹ *Men and Memories: Recollections of William Rothenstein 1900–1922* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1932), p. 122. I would like to thank Ilaria Della Monica and Giovanni Pagliarulo at the Biblioteca Berenson Archive, Villa I Tatti. My special gratitude goes to the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and generous recommendations.

traditionally associated with men.² However, as Rothenstein reveals, the historical representation reproduced by mainstream accounts of modern art historiography does not correspond to the heterogeneity of the past. Reflecting on the inclusion of Lee and Cruttwell on his list should also beg the question of how women's scholarship was received at the time, and what difference women brought to these networks.

Yet the writing of the history of women's contribution to art history requires some historiographical adjustments. Pamela Gerrish Nunn has suggested that, in order to redress the gender imbalance within the discipline, the 'additive' project of feminist art history should be expanded to include a deconstruction of art historiography as well: 'to expose the true worth of women's work we must rethink the definitions and categories of patriarchal history.'³ Maud Cruttwell's writings respond usefully to this desire to reassess the definitions and categories of traditional art history, for her list of writings on art and cultural history includes the publication of original documents, which had considerable importance for professional scholarship, alongside city guides, instead intended for use by the general traveller.⁴ In order to expose 'the true worth of women's work', as Gerrish Nunn invites us to do, we must observe women art historians at work and evaluate how the practice of art history is gendered.

A Jewish woman in a city that had become a haven for many *stranieri invertiti* in the intellectual colony,⁵ Cruttwell was openly lesbian and belonged to a community of art writers that had turned aesthetics into a religion and sexual openness into a liberal politics.⁶ Her scholarship was

² Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 56. For a response to Huyssen's argument with specific reference to women connoisseurs, see Meaghan Clarke and Francesco Ventrella, 'Introduction: Women's Expertise and the Culture of Connoisseurship', *Visual Resources*, 33 (2017), 1–10.

³ Pamela Gerrish Nunn, 'Critically Speaking', in *Women in the Victorian Art World*, ed. by Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 107–24 (p. 123).

⁴ Maud Cruttwell, *A Guide to the Paintings in the Florentine Galleries* (London: Dent, 1907); and Maud Cruttwell, *Venice and her Treasures* (London: Methuen, 1909).

⁵ 'The most singular thing about her is that while she has the most Anglo-Saxon look imaginable her mother was a full blooded Jewess.' Bernard Berenson to Senda Berenson, Florence, Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Biblioteca Berenson, The Bernard and Mary Berenson Papers (BMBP). Leo Stein, instead, described Cruttwell as 'one of those frowsy-headed red-faced English women of uncertain age, whom you could put on the stage as a type of Britisher without any further make-up'. Quoted in Ernest Samuels, *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Connoisseur* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 354.

⁶ For a discussion of the queer capacities of Renaissance historiography during the long nineteenth century, see Yvonne Ivory, *The Homosexual Revival of Renaissance Style, 1850–1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009); and Will Fisher, 'The Sexual Politics

instrumental in redefining the boundaries of the old master monograph. In this article I would like to consider her specialization in this scholarly genre in light of her *eccentric*, but not marginal, position within the professionalization of art history at the *fin de siècle*.⁷ What difference did Cruttwell make to art history? And what difference does she bring to a feminist revision of modern art historiography?

The association of the old masters with painting is a convention connected to the securing of pictures for the supply of public and private collections during the nineteenth century. Still, when we turn to art historical writing in the same period, the life and work of the old masters appear entangled with the modern format of the monograph, obviously inspired by the Renaissance model of Vasari's *Lives* (1550/68), which included painters, but also sculptors and architects.⁸ In continuity with this tradition, Cruttwell's interest in the old masters therefore exceeded the singular association with painting. Indeed, the catalogue of her monographs seems to suggest that she privileged those artists from the Italian Renaissance that transgressed the medium specificity of painting, like Verrocchio and Pollaiuolo, or those whose painting could be studied as an emanation from sculpture, like Mantegna with the antique, or Signorelli with Donatello.⁹

Towards the end of the century, the old master monograph came to coincide with an increasing interest in life writing among the reading public and the development of connoisseurship in art history.¹⁰ Thus, the Renaissance cult of the individual found in the old master monograph its modern historical and aesthetic manifestation, which satisfied the move towards individualism in Victorian aesthetics as well as economics.¹¹ As Gabriele Guercio has convincingly argued in his study of the origins of the monograph in art historiography, the modernity of this format lies in its

of Victorian Historiographical Writing about the "Renaissance", *GLQ*, 14 (2007), 41–67.

⁷ Here I use this adjective with specific reference to Teresa de Lauretis's feminist theorization of historical consciousness: Teresa de Lauretis, 'Eccentric Subjects: Feminist Theory and Historical Consciousness', *Feminist Studies*, 16 (1990), 115–50.

⁸ For a discussion of the influence of Vasari on Victorian life writing and historiography, see Hilary Fraser, 'Vasari's *Lives* and the Victorians', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Giorgio Vasari*, ed. by David J. Cast (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 277–94; and Patricia Rubin, "'Not [...]' what I would fain offer, but [...]' what I am able to present": Mrs. Jonathan Foster's translation of Vasari's *Lives*', in *Le vite del Vasari: genesi, topoi, ricezione*, ed. by Katja Burzer and others (Venice: Marsilio, 2010), pp. 317–31.

⁹ For an analysis of women writing on sculpture in the nineteenth century, see Hilary Fraser, 'Women and the Modelling of Victorian Sculptural Discourse', *Visual Resources*, 33 (2017), 74–93.

¹⁰ Karen Junod, 'The Lives of the Old Masters: Reading, Writing, and Reviewing the Renaissance', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 30 (2008), 67–82.

¹¹ Regenia Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 90–114.

capacity to engender a representation of selfhood as endlessly becoming: the monograph ‘sustained the belief in the artwork as a dialectical object, if not a living entity’.¹² Such definitions are highly apt when introducing Cruttwell’s approach to the genre.

All of Cruttwell’s monographs open with a chapter on the ‘characteristics’ of the old master in question, a procedure that discloses her allegiance to the ‘scientific method’ of connoisseurship, or new art criticism, associated with Giovanni Morelli’s (1816–1891) visual approach. This involved making attributions in painting through the identification of characteristic patterns (*Grundformen*) by which connoisseurs were able to determine the ‘hand’ and, therefore, the individuality of an old master.¹³ Cruttwell’s practice of connoisseurship was also coloured by the influence of contemporary psychological aesthetics, as clearly delineated in 1894 in an article by her friend and mentor Mary Costelloe (later Berenson), who avowed that the new art criticism had to rest on the merging of the Morellian method with Pater’s aestheticism.¹⁴ In articulating the opinions of her romantic and intellectual partner Bernard Berenson, Mary writes that, in order to become modern, connoisseurship should regard the individual characteristics of an old master as the expression of his ‘artistic personality’.¹⁵ The aesthetic literature of Walter Pater (1839–1894), professor of Classics at Oxford, had a huge influence on the young Berenson and his life partner. Pater’s definition of personality as ‘outline’ in *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) resonated with Berenson’s psychological rethinking of the ‘quality’ of the line to attribute authorship in painting.¹⁶ Berenson’s first and only artist

¹² Gabriele Guercio, *Art as Existence: The Artist’s Monograph and its Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), p. 19.

¹³ Cruttwell announces herself in her writings as ‘a student of the much-abused new school of art criticism’ in Maud Cruttwell, ‘The Recent Changes in the Florentine Galleries’, *Athenaeum*, 13 April 1907, p. 449.

¹⁴ After an introduction made by Vernon Lee, in 1894 Cruttwell started to work as housekeeper and secretary for Mary Costelloe before the latter married Bernard Berenson in 1900. In the first stages of her career, Cruttwell could rely on Mary for some feedback on her work: ‘Maud Cruttwell came here and read me the Signorelli, which will, I think, be very decent’ (Mary Berenson’s diary, 7 May 1899, BMBP); ‘Miss Cruttwell to lunch and read her Signorelli Orvieto chapter’ (diary, 31 May 1899). For an assessment of the relationship between the two women, see Hilary Fraser, *Women Writing Art History in the Nineteenth Century: Looking Like a Woman*, Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture, 95 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 34.

¹⁵ Mary Whitall Costelloe, ‘The New and the Old Art Criticism’, *Nineteenth Century*, May 1894, pp. 828–37; Mary Logan [Mary Costelloe], ‘The New Art Criticism’, *Atlantic Monthly*, August 1895, pp. 263–70.

¹⁶ Francesco Ventrella, ‘Befriending Botticelli: Psychology and Connoisseurship at the Fin de Siècle’, in *Botticelli Past and Present*, ed. by Ana Debenedetti and Caroline Elam (London: UCL Press, 2019), pp. 116–47 <<https://doi.org/10.14324/111.9781787354593>> (pp. 120–28). For a discussion of Pater’s pro-

monograph, *Lorenzo Lotto: An Essay in Constructive Art Criticism* (1895) was written primarily to illustrate his concept of ‘artistic personality’ and was innovative within the genre. The corpus of Lotto (1480–1556), which did not represent particularly complex problems of attribution at the time, served for Berenson to demonstrate how the ‘character’ of an artist can be identified in certain ‘habits of execution’.¹⁷ Indeed, it was amid this intellectual network of people and ideas that Cruttwell, originally trained as a painter of eighteenth-century inspired domestic scenes, was to have her apprenticeship in Florence on both connoisseurship and aesthetics.¹⁸

In this article I focus on two major monographs signed by Cruttwell at the very beginning of the twentieth century, *Luca and Andrea della Robbia and their Successors* (1902) and *Antonio Pollaiuolo* (1907), and explain why she harnessed Berenson’s lesson about ‘artistic personality’ in order to create continuities between old masters that moved freely across media, from painting to sculpture, from ceramics to embroidery.¹⁹ Very different in scholarly scope and readership, these two monographs are useful to examine a split that occurred at the end of the nineteenth century between a curatorial approach to the old masters and the aesthetic appreciation of their work concerned with the psychology of the artist and its effects on the beholder. Yet, while her monographs followed a philosophical and aesthetic project, which unequivocally showed her professional allegiance to the Berensons, they also registered the specificity of her position as a new woman in a mostly male professional field.

Cruttwell worked freelance during a period of exceptional growth for the art press, which provided women with novel opportunities to write about the Renaissance while earning an income, as well as with critical authority in the fast-developing professional field of art history.²⁰ Yet the

to-psychological ruminations on historical personalities, see Stephen Cheeke, ‘Pateresque: The Person, the Prose Style’, *Cambridge Quarterly*, 46 (2017), 251–69.

¹⁷ Bernard Berenson, *Lorenzo Lotto: An Essay in Constructive Art Criticism* (New York: Putnam’s Sons, 1895), pp. xiii–xviii. Many recent scholars have drawn attention to the connection between Berenson and William James with regard to the psychology of habit. See Jeremy Melius, ‘Connoisseurship, Painting, and Personhood’, *Art History*, 34 (2011), 288–309.

¹⁸ Maud Cruttwell worked in Kensington at 25 Bolton Studios on Redcliffe Road. Her works, usually of small scale and modest quality, often depicted genteel pastimes. In 1891 she exhibited a picture at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition bearing a title reminiscent of the contemporary vogue for collecting and connoisseurship, *A Doubtful Bargain* (cat. no. 944). See Christopher Wood, *Dictionary of Victorian Painters* (Woodbridge: Antique Collector’s Club, 1995), p. 125.

¹⁹ Maud Cruttwell, *Luca and Andrea della Robbia and their Successors* (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1902); Maud Cruttwell, *Antonio Pollaiuolo* (London: Duckworth, 1907).

²⁰ Meaghan Clarke, ‘Turn-of-the-Century Women Writing about Art, 1880–1920’, in *The History of British Women’s Writing*, ed. by Cora Kaplan and Jennie Batchelor, 10 vols (London: Macmillan, 2010–18), vii: *1880–1920*, ed. by Holly Laird (2016), pp. 258–72; Amy M. Von Lintel, “Excessive industry”: Female Art Historians,

pressures she had to negotiate as a professional writer whose sole income, unlike some of her male counterparts, was derived from commercial publishing, had a considerable impact upon her working methods.²¹ In her insightful analysis of Cruttwell's career path, Hilary Fraser has already made some important comments on the struggle for professional recognition of a woman who was as determined, driven, and motivated 'as any of her male contemporaries'.²² Here, by examining a number of unpublished letters that enlighten us on the networks and methods of this overlooked art historian, I also want to consider Cruttwell's position in art historiography and assess how her work was received by fellow art historians working in the same fields: Bernard Berenson, Wilhelm von Bode, and Allan Marquand.

'I see no way before me except the path cleared by my own hatchet': the hunt for della Robbias

In his proto-psychological ruminations on Renaissance artists, Walter Pater imagined an interesting aesthetic configuration by means of which the temperament of one artist or school working in one medium could influence the expression of another artist or school working in another. His creative criticism was the product of a historical fiction, which conveyed the promise for modern audiences of being influenced by the 'impress' of an artist's soul.²³ The chapter on Luca della Robbia, included in his best-selling volume *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), accordingly argued that fifteenth-century sculpture shared with painting the same 'profound expressiveness, that intimate impress of an indwelling soul'.²⁴ As Lene Østermark-Johansen has pointed out, Luca della Robbia 'was chosen

Popular Publishing and Professional Access', in *Women, Femininity and Public Space in European Visual Culture, 1789–1914*, ed. by Temma Balducci and Heather Belnap Jensen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 115–29.

²¹ The title of my article takes inspiration from Michelle O'Malley, *Painting under Pressure: Fame, Reputation and Demand in Renaissance Florence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). Her acute considerations about the impact of social pressures upon the determination of the quality and price of the works produced within Renaissance workshops resonate strongly with my investigation of the role that both the publishing market and professional competition played in the construction of women's critical authority.

²² *Women Writing Art History*, p. 37. Fraser rightly stresses Cruttwell's social skills for keeping both Vernon Lee and the Berensons on her side.

²³ Jonah Siegel has intriguingly defined this chain of influence in terms of an 'erotics of learning'. See Jonah Siegel, 'Leonardo, Pater, and the Challenge of Attribution', in *Walter Pater: Transparencies of Desire*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Lesley Higgins, and Carolyn Williams (Greensboro: ELT Press, 2002), pp. 159–87 (p. 176).

²⁴ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, ed. by Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 40.

as the titular hero of Pater's essay because he would provide a welcome pretext for just such a theoretical discussion of the boundaries between sculpture and painting'.²⁵ It is on this path that Cruttwell crafted her synchronic system of influences which allowed an artist's character to contract and expand across media. Her interest in the old masters cannot be dissociated from the opportunities that the format of the monograph offered, as a form of life writing, to systematize an organic relationship between the artist and his work, while bridging the gap between attribution and aesthetic appreciation.

The commission to write a book on the della Robbias presented Cruttwell with the welcome opportunity to expand Pater's aesthetic project, whose lesson she had absorbed from the Berensons, and also from Vernon Lee.²⁶ As we learn from letters to her friend, the Bloomsbury hostess Ottoline Morrell (1873–1938), on whom she was to develop a strong infatuation, Cruttwell saw this new project in an aesthetic as well as ethical continuity with the monograph on Andrea Mantegna she had just finished in 1901:

I could not have had anything offered me that would have pleased me more than the study of Luca and Andrea della Robbia. It's the same grand nature expressing itself in them, that has been such a deep tow in Mantegna — purity of the soul and high ideals and energy — It's turning from one great school to another — it is very lucky for I feel I could never study with any real love artists who had not got this genius.²⁷

The emphatic tone of this passage should not distract us from the philosophical principles behind her reasoning. The transhistorical resonance between the personality of the artist and that of the scholar becomes meaningful in the light of an ethical project intellectually related to the Hegelian conception of *Bildung*, which she was to transmogrify from Pater.²⁸ The link between the painter Mantegna and the sculptors della Robbia is obviously not based on medium, but on a common 'nature'. It is because Cruttwell

²⁵ Lene Østermark-Johansen, 'Relieving the Limitations of Sculpture and Text: Walter Pater's Della Robbia Essay', *Word & Image*, 22 (2006), 27–38 (p. 28).

²⁶ Although I am aware that Vernon Lee, too, was extremely important to Cruttwell's aesthetic ideas, in this article I will focus only on her Berensonian network.

²⁷ Maud Cruttwell to Ottoline Morrell, 24 April 1901, Maud Cruttwell's letters to Lady Ottoline Morrell, BMBP, BER22. Subsequent references for letters from Cruttwell to Morrell are all from this archive and will be noted by date after quotations in the text.

²⁸ For a critical analysis of Pater's Hegelian influences, see Kate Hext, 'The Limitations of Schilleresque Self-Culture in Pater's Individualist Aesthetics', in *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions: Pater across the Arts*, ed. by Elicia Clements and Lesley J. Higgins (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 205–19.

was already familiar with Mantegna's artistic personality that she felt equipped to embark on the study of the della Robbias who, she suggests, shared a similar temperament. Cruttwell thus felt that she had the adequate art historical, aesthetic, but also ethical preparation to move from painting to sculpture workshop. It is in this line of thought that she conceived art historical research as a transformative process that shapes, moulds, and carves the monograph's attempts to reconfigure the forms of life it reads by means of an imagined relation to an old master.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, della Robbia glazed terracottas had become a very popular item in Britain, thanks to strategic acquisitions at the South Kensington Museum and later with the commercialization of 'della Robbia' pottery from Birkenhead.²⁹ But while ceramic enthusiasts in Britain were disputing the quality of contemporary majolica production, art historians had to sieve through the output of one of the most intricate problems in modern connoisseurship, for the question of influence and attribution within the della Robbia workshop was complicated by the fact that this was a family business: Luca della Robbia (1399/1400–1482), unmarried, worked with his nephew Andrea (1435–1525) who had two sons, Girolamo (1488–1566) and Giovanni (1469–1529). Each one of these artists produced a tin-glazed majolica that was easily recognizable as a type, but how could contemporary art historians and connoisseurs tell apart the different 'hands' from among the serial production of ceramic work, hands traditionally noted for their secret technique rather than individual styles? It was indeed at the end of the nineteenth century that art historians started to disentangle these problems of attribution.

Cruttwell's initial research relied on three extensive but incomplete recent works. Sculptor Jacopo Cavallucci and Louvre curator Émile Molinier jointly authored *Les della Robbia* (1884), complete with unpublished documents largely used by Marcel Reymond in his 1897 monograph, which first discussed a method to identify the works by Luca, Andrea, and Giovanni, based on the ample use of Alinari photographic reproductions.³⁰ The less ambitious monograph by the Marchesa Burlamacchi on Luca della Robbia (1900) instead focused mostly on the works still on site around central Italy.³¹ In 1901 Cruttwell was already at work on the overlooked

²⁹ Charlotte Drew, 'Luca della Robbia: South Kensington and the Victorian Revival of a Florentine Sculptor', *Sculpture Journal*, 23 (2014), 171–83; and Julie Sheldon, "'Inspired by the Florentine originals": Rathbone and the della Robbia', in *The Della Robbia Pottery: From Renaissance to Regent Street*, ed. by Julie Sheldon (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), pp. 55–72 (p. 69).

³⁰ Jacopo Cavallucci and Émile Molinier, *Les della Robbia: leur vie et leur oeuvre d'après des documents inédits* (Paris: Librairie de l'art, 1884); Marcel Reymond, *Les della Robbia* (Florence: Alinari, 1897). See also, Gustavo Frizzoni, review of Marcel Reymond, *Les della Robbia*, *Archivio storico dell'arte*, 2nd ser., 3 (1897), 315–20.

³¹ Marchesa Burlamacchi, *Luca della Robbia* (London: Bell, 1900). Lucy Baxter also

contribution of Girolamo in the colourful frieze of the Spedale del Ceppo in Pistoia for an article for the *Gazette des beaux-arts*, which she wanted to use as a watershed to solve some of the vexed problems in attribution, which had remained unresolved by other scholars.³²

When the publisher John Dent identified a gap in the English publishing market, he originally asked the renowned art critic Julia Cartwright (1851–1924) to write a monograph on the della Robbias.³³ But, when the English writer Janet Ross (1842–1927) and her niece Lina Duff Gordon (1874–1964) introduced him to Cruttwell, he immediately realized that she had the knowledge and the capacity to produce a very different book, not without incurring Cartwright's disappointment.³⁴ Cruttwell was obviously extremely pleased by this commission and the letters to Ottoline Morrell are an exceptional source of information to gauge the development of her project and her feelings towards it:

Dent — the publisher of the temple classics and of the Med. Town series — has given me a splendid bit of work — a large book on the Della Robbias, to be illustrated completely — that is no restrictions and an edition de luxe — which (if I do it properly) will at once bring me all I want of fame and future work. (BMBP, 24 April 1901, emphasis in original)

published a monograph under the pseudonym Leader Scott on the della Robbias in this period: *Luca della Robbia with Other Italian Sculptors* (New York: Scribner & Welford; London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1883).

³² The article in question, however, would not be published until 1904, partly because of Mary Berenson's interference. Cruttwell was very anxious about delays in publication; she explained to Mary that Allan Marquand was preparing an article on the same subject. 'It was quite arranged and then on the last day of the month again he [Ephrussi] put me off with some feeble excuses of printer's failure, upon which I wrote what I intended to be an ultimatum' (BMBP, [January 1902]). For a discussion of the vicissitudes around this article, see Fraser, *Women Writing Art History*, pp. 35–36.

³³ 'Very long talk with Dent [...]. His two dreams are to bring out a Luca della Robbia and a Fra Angelico book, both at five shillings if possible, so as to sell by the thousands, and to be an introduction to Italian art for children.' See the entry for 16 February 1899, in *A Bright Remembrance: The Diaries of Julia Cartwright 1851–1924*, ed. by Angela Emanuel (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), pp. 236–37. The final detail about the target readership suggests that the project he had in mind for Cartwright was very different from the one he later developed with Cruttwell.

³⁴ 'Dent came out to Florence this spring and engaged Miss Cruttwell to write on Luca (very shabby of him after going so far with me) and all sorts of people who know nothing about their subject' (17 July 1901, *A Bright Remembrance*, ed. by Emanuel, p. 258). An examination of the relationship between the two critics still awaits a serious study. It was apparently Cartwright who convinced Cruttwell to take up the study of art. See Meaghan Clarke, *Critical Voices: Women and Art Criticism in Britain, 1880–1905* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 29.

The production standards of the book (*Fig. 1*) were of particular concern to Cruttwell as she was still recovering from the bad sales of her previous monograph on Mantegna, which she attributed to poor manufacture: 'If we can both do decently — he [Dent] with the advertising and illustrations and I with the writing, it may give me a real chance.'³⁵ But she also attached a special significance to this book, which conveyed a distinctive understanding of herself as a woman and a scholar: 'People congratulate their friends when they marry and have children to rear and a new and happy vista of usefulness opens to them. This is my chance and in my life takes all that place' (BMBP, [May 1901(?)], emphasis in original). A single, unmarried woman, and a sexual dissident, Cruttwell had different things to be congratulated for, and the family devotion that was expected of a woman of her time here is replaced by a professional achievement that is worthy of recognition by another woman.

The only 'little flaw in this joy', she tells Morrell, was the fact that Dent, out of concern that another publisher would bring out a similar book, expected the final manuscript to be submitted in around twelve months: 'On that he was inflexible, so I had to submit' (BMBP, [May

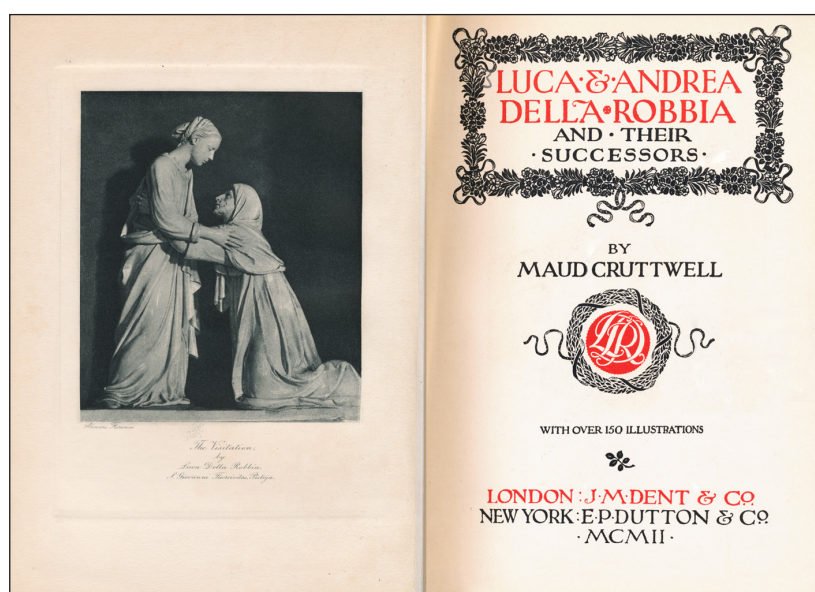


Fig. 1: Frontispiece of Maud Cruttwell, Luca and Andrea Della Robbia and their Successors (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1902). Photo: National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

³⁵ 'My Mantegna has had a hard week overshadowed by the big book and that ignominious edition, and I have a real chance with Dent, who wants to bring out Della Robbia in what he calls "fine style"' (Cruttwell to Morrell, BMBP, [May 1901(?)]).

1901(?)). Cruttwell was to learn quickly how to manage the demands of the publishing industry and strike a balance with her scholarly aspirations. In the following months, she travelled around Tuscany and Lazio on the hunt for della Robbia works still *in situ*; she also visited the Paris, Munich, and Berlin collections. During her expeditions, Cruttwell started to come across unattributed works, which suggested to her that previous scholars had not seen some of the works first-hand:

It is practically untrodden ground and the only reason I can think of for such obvious things having passed unnoticed is that of all these writers of any note on the Della Robbia Bode lives in Berlin, Raymond in Paris, and Marquand in N[ew] York and only pay occasional visits to Florence where all Luca's work is. (Cruttwell to Morrell, BMBP, 7 November 1902)

Within the culture of connoisseurship, access to the object represented a guarantee of critical authority, especially for women. As Caroline Palmer has explained in her study of women's travel writing, 'the increasingly scientific approach to art criticism that emerged in the early 19th century offered women an advantage, as it valued individual knowledge acquired through empirical experience above innate taste'.³⁶ By the end of the century, the Morellian method was perceived as a further advancement in empirical scholarship, and many women art historians started to embrace it in order to validate their expertise.³⁷

During the summer of 1901, Cruttwell spent some time at the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum in Berlin, where the director Wilhelm von Bode (1845–1929) had accumulated a considerable collection of della Robbia sculpture and a library. An account of her working day suggests a very intense schedule:

10–1 at the library reading Bode and all the German writings on Della Robbia and after lunch copying my notes and trying to write at last. Then at 4.30 walking and shopping etc. takes up the rest of the time till after dinner [...]. They are so nice at the library, every care is taken of one and no introduction is needed and all tips are forbidden. It's a perfectly managed place and the reading room is the best of its kind I know. (Cruttwell to Morrell, BMBP, 18 August 1901)

³⁶ Caroline Palmer, "I will tell nothing that I did not see": British Women's Travel Writing, Art and the Science of Connoisseurship, 1776–1860', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 51 (2015), 248–68 (p. 249).

³⁷ On the advantages offered by the Morellian method for the development of women's connoisseurial authority, see Francesco Ventrella, 'Constance Jocelyn Ffoulkes and the Modernization of Scientific Connoisseurship', *Visual Resources*, 33 (2017), 117–39.

In those years, the museum was being rebuilt and refurbished according to new principles of contextual display, which aspired to the creation of a harmonious totality between painting, sculpture, and decorative arts (*Fig. 2*).³⁸ This period of intensive study in Berlin became instrumental for Cruttwell not only to find her own working methods, but also to develop the conviction to carry them out. When she finally met with Bode, she understood a flaw in his approach to connoisseurship, which she discussed with Morrell in writing:

Bode is interesting. He is very learned and knows so much about the history of Renaissance sculpture and writes delightfully, clearly and concisely, but he seems without any sense of what is good in art. If he finds the same kind of fold or the same motive or some school likeness, it is enough for



Fig. 2: The Donatello Room at the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, 1904.
© Zentralarchiv, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

³⁸ The new museum was inaugurated in 1904. See Alexis Joachimides, 'Die Schule des Geschmacks: Das Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum als Reformprojekt', in *Museumsinszenierungen: zur Geschichte der Institution des Kunstmuseums, die Berliner Museumlandschaft 1830–1990*, ed. by Alexis Joachimides (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1995), pp. 142–56; and Malcolm Baker, 'Bode and Museum Display: The Arrangement of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum and the South Kensington Response', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, 38 (1996), 143–53.

him and the quality of work he is quite blind to. This accounts for his extraordinary attributions in the Museum, but the mere history he gives so well, and has a delightful general appreciation of the work he deals with. Only masters and schools are inextricably mixed. (BMBP, 18 August 1901)

Cruttwell was very conscious of the importance of both scholarly writing and museum display in creating plausible connections for the practice of connoisseurship, and the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum was the very embodiment of the methodology of its director. However, Bode's typological approach to attribution was faulty, according to Cruttwell, because he was incapable of appreciating the 'quality' of an old master. The term 'quality' has a very specific meaning in this context because it resonates with the ideas that Berenson was formalizing in the same years in his methodological essay 'Rudiments of Connoisseurship', in which he defined the quality of an old master as relating to the 'characteristics affording an intimate revelation of personality' in an artwork.³⁹ While Berenson conceived the category of 'quality' only in relation to painting, Cruttwell was proposing an expansion to sculpture that was elaborated on Pater's aesthetic example, an initiative that proved fatal in the eyes of specialist curators like Bode, as I explain below.

From Berlin, Cruttwell made contact with another eminent della Robbia scholar, Allan Marquand (1853–1924) at Princeton, who was also engaged in a catalogue of Luca's works.⁴⁰ Although she could use the name of the Berensons to introduce herself to Marquand, apparently Bernard did not seem to support her project: 'Berenson has thwarted me in every way by telling people I am not fit for the work and I have no right with my small experience to attempt such untrodden ground.' Cruttwell found Berenson's behaviour 'surly' but, at the same time, she knew that she had to be careful not to act 'contrary to the counsels of a man who has the power to help or hinder'. Yet the letters to Morrell also convey the strong sense of commitment and determination that would be the success of her work:

I see no way before me except the path cleared by my own hatchet. Berenson's path I would rather avoid as companion or disciple, much as I honour his genius, for I could never follow the lead of a mind so unsteady and ill balanced. (BMBP, [May 1902(?)])

³⁹ Bernard Berenson, *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, 2nd ser. (London: Bell, 1902), p. 123. For a discussion of the genealogies of Berenson's definition of 'quality', see Ventrella, 'Befriending Botticelli', pp. 128–33.

⁴⁰ Maud Cruttwell to Allan Marquand, 13 August 1901, Princeton University Library, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Allan Marquand Papers (AMP). Subsequent references for letters from Cruttwell to Marquand are all from this archive and will be noted by date after quotations in the text.

Schooled in Berenson's line of suspicion, the first letters to Marquand have a cautious and obsequious tone. Slowly, her letters become a conduit to impart information to the Princeton professor, which displayed, sometimes ostentatiously, that her findings were based on the direct study of the works she had seen in small Italian towns. Cruttwell indulges in the discussion of technicalities that only autopsy could have afforded, almost as if she wanted to expose the limits of Marquand's expertise. In one letter, she even illustrates with a sketch some of the fourteen roundels in the Spedale degli Innocenti of Florence, to demonstrate for him that Andrea's originals can be identified by the segments that radiate from the figures in the blue-glazed background, which instead follows the outline of the baby in the replicas produced by Ginori much later (*Fig. 3*).

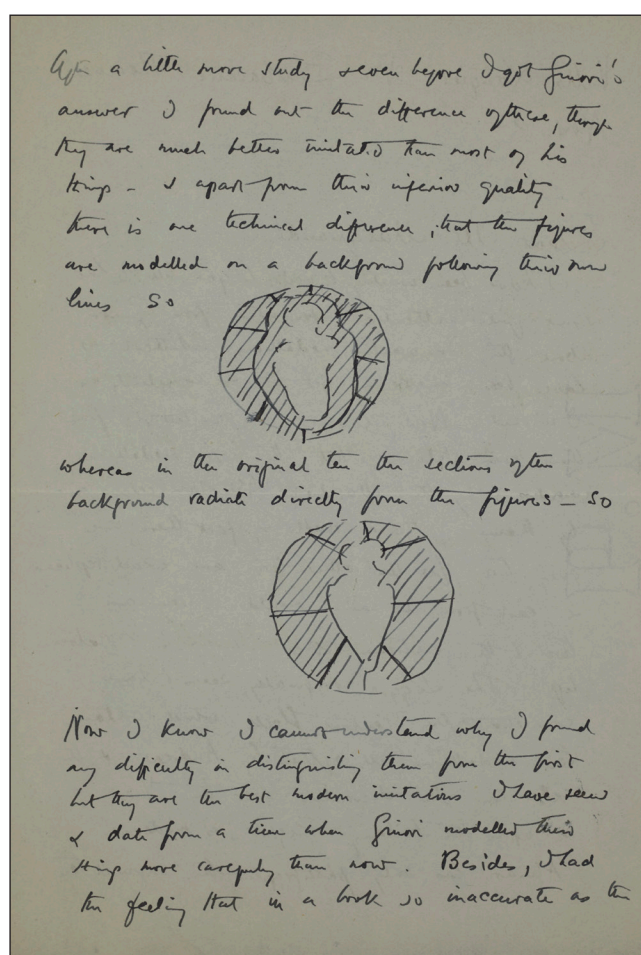


Fig. 3: Maud Cruttwell to Allan Marquand, 25 November 1902. © Princeton University Library, Allan Marquand Papers.

More than once in these letters to Marquand she intimates that it is impossible to make sound attributions based on hearsay or simply by judging from photographs.⁴¹ At the same time, she earned Marquand's trust by sharing with him the photographs of works that she thought might be compared with similar specimens on the other side of the Atlantic.⁴² When she finally sent over a list of works for him to check what was in the American collections she had not seen, she flattered him by asking 'whether you would allow me to mention your name as having helped me, which would give authority to the statement'. By this point, Cruttwell had only a few months left until her deadline to submit the manuscript, and she was not ashamed to ask Marquand if he could get her an answer as soon as possible (AMP, [May 1902], emphasis in original). Yet the self-assurance that she maintained before Marquand turned into stress and anxiety with Morrell, as she was forced to decline her invitation to spend some time together in England:

Any prospect of change is absolutely out of question for me and if I am to finish this work by June. I have calculated that I must work at least 6 hours a day to get it done at all — well or ill — and the larger I work the better it will be. And it's worth the effort. (BMBP, [May 1902])

Cruttwell's epistolary exchanges with Morrell and Marquand represent two different but intertwined facets of the life of an art historian at work at the turn of the century, but also display the social skills required in the field of connoisseurship to sustain the professional trust necessary to develop an expertise. Access to objects and recognition from fellow art historians working in the same field were necessary instruments to validate one's scholarship. Unlike Marquand, Cruttwell did not have an academic position which could afford her the prolonged time required for research. As she was bound by contract to a publisher, she was writing under pressure. A note received by Marquand in October 1902 to accompany her freshly

⁴¹ 'The search has made me feel that not a single work, even of the school, ought to be taken on hearsay, or even from photographs, but studied carefully from the originals, and I should like to have as many years as I have months to give to the study alone' (AMP, 8 October 1901). Cruttwell is particularly dismissive of Marchesa Burlamacchi.

⁴² 'The photograph has come (of Miss Gilbert's Della Robbia) but at present only one very bad copy, enough to judge by however. It is a most lovely head that goes exactly with the Annunciation of La Verna and the Osservanza Coronation. One would like to know what has been of the rest of the Altarpiece. It must have been large for the head is heavily life size. The truly genuine one of this date which has lost its head in an Assumption in the Met. Museum New York, but this is evidently meant to be looked at side face and the Assumptions are always full face. Still I shall send it to Prof. Marquand to see if it fits' (Cruttwell to Morrell, BMBP, [1902]).

printed book reads like a regretful reflection on precisely the conditions of her work: 'If I had been able at the last to withhold it for another year's study I should have done so, but it was impossible' (AMP, 24 October 1902). Indeed, that remained an impossibility until the end of her career. For even if Cruttwell's monographs made her an expert in old masters, she would never be able to rely on institutional support, nor on the profits from art dealing enjoyed by some of her male colleagues.

The della Robbia monograph received positive reviews from the art press. Only Bode got in touch with her by letter to express some unsolicited criticism, which she quickly reported to Morrell:

Dr Bode is furious with me about my attributions. He was so kind and courteous before and now he has written me a bitter letter full of abuse of Raymond — which is quite gratuitous as I have followed Raymond no more than him. I suppose it was to be expected and that I ought to take it as a compliment that he is roused by it, even to wrath.⁴³

As I discuss in the following section, Bode's disagreement was levelled at Cruttwell's methodology, but it also targeted the professional allegiances that it implied. Her monograph on the della Robbias remained the first comprehensive study of that family workshop until Marquand published his volume on Luca in 1914.⁴⁴ Yet at a time of increasing specialization, her aesthetic approach to the study of the old masters embodied a difference that some curators and art historians struggled to keep within the ever narrowing borders of the discipline.

**'The strength and energy of his work and the simple austerity of his life':
Antonio Pollaiuolo and the reworking of tactile values**

Research for the della Robbia monograph had inaugurated for Cruttwell a novel approach to archival materials. Her subsequent books on Andrea del Verrocchio (1435–1488) and Antonio Pollaiuolo (1431–1498), published by Gerald Duckworth, only reiterated her commitment to historical documents, which corresponded with the beginning of a collaboration with *L'Arte*, the prestigious Italian art history journal associated with documentary scholarship and the European circles of *Kunstwissenschaft*.⁴⁵

⁴³ 'Yes, my Robbia book has been a great pleasure to me especially the notice I had in the *Daily Chronicle* which pleased me most because it was written by a student and because he gave me the praise I most care of being correct and thorough. I had also a very good one in the *Standard*' (BMBP, 4 December 1902).

⁴⁴ Allan Marquand, *Luca della Robbia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1914).

⁴⁵ Maud Cruttwell, *Verrocchio* (London: Duckworth, 1904). On the origins of the *scuola storica* in art historiography and the influence of *L'Arte* (formerly *L'Archivio*

Initially, Cruttwell's letters suggest that she seemed to worry about losing the Berensons' trust by taking up two new monographs.⁴⁶ Indeed, she was able to sustain Berenson's favour at the same time as she was becoming closer to the circles of the German Kunsthistorische Gesellschaft in Florence, more interested in documentary evidence.⁴⁷ As demonstrated by her article on three unpublished documents regarding Verrocchio, Cruttwell had become quite familiar with local archives.⁴⁸ Her friendship with the influential Georg Gronau (1868–1937), an expert in Venetian art and later director of the Kassel Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, must have further facilitated her access to a wealth of unstudied repositories around Tuscany.⁴⁹ When, in 1905, she stumbled upon a trail of cadastral records submitted at the end of the fifteenth century by Antonio, Giovanni, and Jacopo Pollaiuolo, the path was open to move from Verrocchio to Antonio Pollaiuolo and to claim the necessary expertise to confront again the problem of distinguishing from among artists' hands those who were blood relatives. Like Verrocchio, Antonio Pollaiuolo had strong ties with sculpture, but also with embroidery and goldsmith work.⁵⁰

New interest in Antonio Pollaiuolo had arisen in 1897 after the discovery of an impressive fresco cycle at Villa La Gallina in Arcetri near Florence (Fig. 4), which was first attributed to Antonio by Mary Costelloe in an article for *La Chronique des arts* (a supplement of the *Gazette des beaux-arts*).⁵¹ Cruttwell had therefore been able to see the frescoes before restoration took away much of their original character, and her description of them is dependent upon Mary's proposed comparison with Botticelli's Flora.⁵²

storico dell'arte), see *L'Archivio Storico dell'Arte e le origini della 'Kunstwissenschaft' in Italia*, ed. by Gianni Carlo Sciolla and Franca Varallo (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'orso, 1999).

⁴⁶ 'I am worrying rather over my Duckworth-Strong work, you aren't vexed with me for accepting it are you?' (BMBP, [1902]). This long letter to Mary Berenson is concerned with the assumption that Charles Strong was the editor of the series.

⁴⁷ 'Oh I get every day to have less faith in other Kunstforschers, and more and more in Mr Berenson. I shall end by writing a sonnet to him and appending it to one of any many monographs "To the onlie begetter of any wisdom in Kunstforschung Mr B.B. all happiness and that eternitie &c, &c." Shall I do it in my Verrocchio and stiffen the hair of Mr Strong' (BMBP, [1902]).

⁴⁸ Maud Cruttwell, 'Tre documenti del Verrocchio', *L'Arte*, 7 (1904), 167–68.

⁴⁹ Cruttwell explicitly acknowledges Gronau's support in another article on Verrocchio, 'Un disegno del Verrocchio per la "Fede" nella Mercatanzia di Firenze', *Rassegna d'arte*, 6 (1906), 8–11. On Gronau's influence on Italian scholarship, see Giovanna Perini Folesani's essay, in Georg Gronau, *Documenti artistici urbinati*, ed. by Giovanna Perini Folesani (Urbino: Accademia Raffaello, 2011), pp. 5–73.

⁵⁰ Maud Cruttwell, 'Quattro portate del catasto e della decima fatte da Antonio Pollaiuolo, dal fratello Giovanni e da Jacopo loro padre', *L'Arte*, 8 (1905), 381–85.

⁵¹ Mary Logan [Mary Costelloe], 'Découverte d'une fresque de Pollaiuolo', *La Chronique des arts*, 20 November 1897, pp. 343–44.

⁵² Maud Cruttwell, *Antonio Pollaiuolo* (London: Duckworth; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 118.



Fig. 4: Antonio Pollaiuolo, Fresco showing the 'Dancing Nudes', c. 1465, Villa La Gallina, Arcetri (Florence), Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Fototeca Berenson. © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Indeed, while her monograph aspired to make a substantial historical contribution to scholarship on the Pollaiuoli by including a copious appendix of documents, its aesthetic principles show the strong influence of Bernard.

In order to propose sound attributions for Antonio's work, Cruttwell decided to structure her argument by stressing a comparison with his brother Piero (1441–before 1496). Only four years earlier, Bernard Berenson had already posed the Pollaiuolo case in *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, where he clearly set himself the task of distinguishing the hands of the two brothers, on the assumption that Antonio had been a painter all his life.⁵³

⁵³ Bernard Berenson, *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, 2 vols (London: Murray, 1903), I, 17–31. This position has recently been challenged by many scholars. See, for

Thus, Berenson turns to ‘general discussions of artistic personality and character’ to create an opposition between the nervous energy of Antonio and the feebleness of Piero (*Drawings*, 1, 19).

As Aldo Galli has recently pointed out, this opposition was a creative interpretation of the history of the Pollaiuolo brothers inaugurated by Vasari.⁵⁴ Cruttwell is therefore in agreement with this tradition when she makes Antonio the emblematic titular figure of her monograph, and like Vasari she believed that the Pucci altarpiece at the National Gallery, London was a turning point in his accomplishment as a painter (*Fig. 5*). Focusing on one single painting proved an especially convenient method for Cruttwell to show how to distinguish the personalities of the two brothers. The altarpiece had already been the object of considerable discussion in the history of nineteenth-century connoisseurship, and still is.⁵⁵ Morelli had attributed the cartoon to Antonio and the execution to Piero, while Berenson thought both to be the work of Antonio.⁵⁶ Cruttwell, instead, identified in the four archers forming a trapeze the feeble style of Piero and proposed that the whole composition be attributed to him, except the two archers loading their bows in the foreground who, she writes, show the concentrated energy which, associated with physical force and strength, is ‘the essential characteristic of Antonio’.⁵⁷

Interestingly, in order to support her attributions based on the comparison of characteristic details in the treatment of the body, Cruttwell continuously slips into an evaluation of Antonio’s aesthetic quality in the representation of physical movement, which immediately brings to mind the lesson of Berenson. Galli writes that Cruttwell accepted Berenson’s teaching ‘completely’ (p. 45). Yet it was mainly his aesthetic philosophy that she would rework in order to reach different results in terms of attribution. If, as Galli rightly suggests, the Pollaiuolo case presents itself ‘at the level of the study of sources and, more in general, of the “history of art history”’, one also needs to examine more carefully what difference Cruttwell brought to the lesson of her teacher (p. 46).

instance, Miklós Boskovits, ‘Studi sul ritratto fiorentino quattrocentesco II’, *Arte cristiana*, 85 (1997), 335–42; and Angelo Tartuferi, *I Pollaiuolo: La pittura* (Florence: Giunti, 2010).

⁵⁴ Also Aldo Galli, ‘The Fortune of the Pollaiuolo Brothers’, in *Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo: ‘Silver and Gold, Painting and Bronze...’*, ed. by Andrea Di Lorenzo and Aldo Galli (Milan: Skira, 2014), pp. 25–77 (pp. 36–41). I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for suggesting I consider this Vasarian genealogy.

⁵⁵ More recently, the Pucci altarpiece has been widely attributed to Piero alone. Interestingly, Galli argues that ‘the long shadow of Berenson’ has had a huge influence in the Anglo-Saxon opinion against Piero (pp. 43–50).

⁵⁶ Cruttwell, *Pollaiuolo*, p. 153; Berenson, *Drawings*, 1, 24.

⁵⁷ *Pollaiuolo*, p. 187. In another passage, Cruttwell writes that the true idea of Antonio’s appearance corresponded with ‘the strength and energy of his work and the simple austerity of his life’ (p. 20).



Fig. 5: Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo, *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, 1475, oil on wood, 291.5 × 202.6 cm. © National Gallery, London.

While the Morellian method prescribed the study of static physiological forms that bear the trace of an artist's individuality, Cruttwell's writing followed Berenson in the attempt to set forms into motion in order to create a description of the psychology of the artist as well. Particularly interesting is the language that she uses in the passages where she describes the movement of the archers she attributes to Antonio, and the effects these bodies have on the beholder:

Muscular force and effort have never been better presented than in those of Antonio's archer. The toes grip the ground with a tenacity our own muscles involuntarily imitate, while

the legs of Piero's Saint, alike in outline, dangle as feebly as a puppet's. Perhaps never has human energy been so concentrated as in the two archers of Antonio. The bodies vibrate with effort and strain, and even beneath the velvet of the doublet the swell of the muscles is evident. Every sinew in our own body responds more readily than before the antique Hercules, or even than before the athletes of Michelangelo. The two figures represent the climax of physical force and energy. (*Pollaiuolo*, pp. 155–56)

Her emphasis on the spectator's bodily responses follows the German theories of *Einfühlung* (empathy) that were widely discussed in the aesthetic community of expatriates in Florence.⁵⁸ But while Cruttwell's interest in psycho-physiological aesthetics may reflect particularly the experiments that Vernon Lee and her partner Clementina Anstruther-Thomson were conducting in the art galleries — to ascertain to what extent our imitation of the movement we see in paintings is internalized or enacted by our bodies — the very phrasing of this passage explicitly echoes the words that Berenson uses in *The Florentine Painters* to expunge his theory of 'tactile values', that is, the qualities in a painting stimulating the sense of touch.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Berenson insisted that stimulation is imagined rather than physically enacted by the beholder; he clearly speaks of 'ideated sensations'. Cruttwell's ekphrasis, instead, creates a dynamic scene in which the tonic effects of art have become tangible for our bodies, a possibility that must have resonated vividly with modernist readers of Berenson's theories as well.⁶⁰

When Cruttwell turns to the description of Antonio's famous painting of *Hercules and Antaeus* in the Uffizi, she is again probing the language of tactile values on the very artwork that Berenson used as a case study

⁵⁸ For a sample of Cruttwell's exposure to psycho-physiological theories in Florence, see *The Selected Letters of Bernard Berenson*, ed. by A. K. McComb (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), pp. 31–34, 37–38. In May 1895 Mary Costelloe writes in her diary that Cruttwell was with them when Berenson 'discovered' the theory of tactile values while looking at a ballerina by Degas. See Alison Brown, 'Bernard Berenson and "Tactile Values" in Florence', in *Bernard Berenson: Formation and Heritage*, ed. by Joseph Connors and Louis A. Waldman, Villa I Tatti Series, 31 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 101–20 (p. 110). The letters to Morrell also mention that Cruttwell discussed empathy theories with Vernon Lee in the Florentine galleries.

⁵⁹ Carolyn Burdett, "'The subjective inside us can turn into the objective outside': Vernon Lee's Psychological Aesthetics", 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 12 (2011) <<http://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.610>>; Bernard Berenson, *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1896), pp. 50–53.

⁶⁰ For the popularity of Berenson's theories among modernist artists and critics and a discussion of his anti-modernism, see Ian Verstegen, 'Bernard Berenson and the Science of Anti-Modernism', *Art Criticism*, 15.2 (2001), 9–22.

to illustrate the theory to his readers: 'Each muscle is strained to its limit of tension, and as we look, we feel our pulse quicken and our muscles tighten in unconscious imitation.'⁶¹ Interestingly, Berenson's name is neither footnoted nor mentioned in these topical passages, but Cruttwell was fully aware that she was reworking ideas that originated elsewhere. A few years earlier, in a letter to Mary Berenson, she had already conceded the possibility that she 'had unconsciously just stolen from Mr Berenson's *Florentine Painters* to an extent that would merit imprisonment on the score of plagiarism':

I am fed on his ideas, they are bred in the bone & I can't put at the end — 'All this I owe to the first Father of criticism — the only begetter ie B. B.' Really I begin to wonder whether Miss Thomson certainly plagiarised or was only like me saturated with his ideas!⁶²

Cruttwell was indeed one of the witnesses at that nerve-racking meeting of 1897 in which Lee and Anstruther-Thomson showed Mary and her witnesses a series of notes and documents to prove that their psycho-physiological experiments had been developed independently of Berenson's ideas, and that his accusation of plagiarism levelled at their jointly authored article 'Beauty and Ugliness' did not stand.⁶³ Now, with characteristic self-assurance but not without impertinence, and looking for a generous response, Cruttwell candidly admits that she has absorbed Berenson's ideas so deeply, in a fashion that seemingly mirrors the mechanics of artistic influence she had been researching in her old masters.

If, on matters of aesthetics, Cruttwell was to follow Berenson very closely, on matters of attribution she was not afraid of stirring up a disagreement. Indeed, in these foundational years for the settling of old master corpuses and lists, the number of attributions represented the quantitative merit upon which a new monograph would be rated by fellow art historians and connoisseurs, generally not impressed by aesthetic speculations. The stakes were high in Cruttwell's reattributions in the Pollaiuolo monograph as she was targeting highly reputed institutions and professionals. For instance, she argues that the drawing of a male head in the Santarelli Collection at the Uffizi (Cat. 58) had been wrongly attributed to Antonio

⁶¹ Cruttwell, *Pollaiuolo*, p. 70. The reference to the quickening of the pulse also shows a connection to Vernon Lee's work on *Einfühlung* and its impact on heart-beat and breathing, which she elaborated from Giuseppe Sergi. See Susan Lanzoni, 'Practicing Psychology in the Art Gallery: Vernon Lee's Aesthetics of Empathy', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 45 (2009), 330–54.

⁶² BMBP, [1901(?)], quoted in Fraser, *Women Writing Art History*, p. 37.

⁶³ Mandy Gagel, '1897, a Discussion of Plagiarism: Letters between Vernon Lee, Bernard Berenson, and Mary Costelloe', *Literary Imagination*, 12 (2010), 154–79.

when it was, in fact, a copy (*Pollaiuolo*, p. 80). But Cruttwell was also prepared to acknowledge her own blunders. In her previous monograph she had in fact attributed to Verrocchio a stucco relief representing a battle scene, then identified as the Genius of Discord, now possibly the murder of the Maenads by Lycurgus that the Victoria and Albert Museum catalogue instead gave to Leonardo.⁶⁴ Already then, she was able to see the influence of Antonio in the construction of the nude, which reminded her of his popular engraving depicting ten naked men wrestling in a battle. Still, in reconsidering Pollaiuolo's influence, she now pleads guilty as she explains that it is in fact by Antonio, another attribution that does not seem to stick today (*Pollaiuolo*, p. 125).

When Bode reviewed Cruttwell's monograph for the *Burlington Magazine*, he found it accurate and thorough, but not without critical dependence on Berenson's own ideas on Florentine artists.⁶⁵ Bode was not wrong. As we have seen, Cruttwell had made ample use of Berenson's connoisseurship, but also of his theory of tactile values in order to remain relevant to her reading public. However, the review quickly takes a scathing turn that seemingly goes beyond mere questions of attributions when Bode openly claims that 'Miss Cruttwell shows a deplorably deficient critical sense and a defective eye' (p. 181). Bode had more than one reason to undermine Cruttwell's expertise in the old masters. First, by positioning Antonio Pollaiuolo's characteristics along a sculptural lineage of influences, Cruttwell was entering a field with which Bode had come to be associated within the international networks of connoisseurship. Indeed, his main point of criticism is levelled at her method of approaching the plastic arts, which, he writes, was already faulty in her monograph on the della Robbias: 'Here she had no master whom she could implicitly follow, for the Morelli school ignored plastic art' (p. 181). Bode picks on Cruttwell for doubting the authenticity of the bust of Charles VIII of France in the Bargello Museum by proposing that this may be a fake by the famous forger Giovanni Bastianini, and he also claims that her assessments are completely derivative of secondary literature.⁶⁶ His reasons to

⁶⁴ *Verrocchio*, pp. 62–63. Compare with the *List of Objects in the Art Division, South Kensington, Acquired During the Year 1876, Arranged According to the Dates of Acquisition* (London: H.M.S.O., 1877), p. 20. The stucco relief (V&A, 251-1876) is now attributed to Francesco di Giorgio Martini.

⁶⁵ Wilhelm Bode, 'A New Book on the Pollaiuoli', *Burlington Magazine*, 11 (1907), 181–82. See also Tiffany Johnston's article in this issue of 19 which refers to this review.

⁶⁶ Cruttwell, *Donatello* (London: Methuen, 1911), p. 164. We owe an early analysis of Bastianini's forgeries to Nina Barstow, 'The Romance of Art: The Forgeries of Bastianini', *Magazine of Art*, 9 (1886), 503–08. See also Carol Helstosky, 'Giovanni Bastianini, Art Forgery, and the Market in Nineteenth-Century Italy', *Journal of Modern History*, 81 (2009), 793–823.

mar Cruttwell's procedure were not simply driven by sexism implied in the assumption that a woman's scholarship is devoid of originality, but were specifically levelled at the professional and methodological allegiances that she intentionally made legible in her work. As a follower of the Morellian method rebooted by Berenson, Cruttwell, for Bode, lacked the necessary preparation to assess Pollaiuolo's use of colour, which, he suggests, by following Crowe and Cavalcaselle instead, is an essential element with which to appreciate the work of this master. Finally, Bode identified a rhetorical strategy that allegedly recurs in her writing: 'she decries first one author and then his adversary, always with an air of infallible assurance and great scientific pretension. So it is here, where lack of authority leaves authenticity a matter for dispute' (pp. 181–82). These comments point at the way in which attributions were dependent on the craft of writing, but also explain how connoisseurial authority needed to be socially validated.

Second, and closer to Cruttwell's personal anxieties, perhaps, Bode was attacking the demand for old master monographs, books, and pamphlets 'written by *dilettanti* of both sexes who wish to demonstrate their love of art', and sneeringly asks if such works 'were not better left unwritten' (p. 182). He saw that Cruttwell's scholarship had the potential to reach far and wide because she was working for successful commercial publishers with a large distribution that went beyond a professional readership. And this concerned Bode particularly: 'The circulation of such books, which are regarded by the public as the results of the latest scientific research, only impedes the progress of art history, since all their theories are enounced with an air of absolute infallibility' (p. 181). Therefore, Bode lamented a saturation of the English art press with works whose biographical approach — which he compared to the best-selling monographs by German art historian Richard Muther (1860–1909), translated into many languages — was successful with the general public, but which represented a hindrance to serious scholarship. While Bode was correct in associating Cruttwell with the biographical model, he nevertheless failed to recognize that her monographs were driven by an aesthetic project that had nothing to do with Muther's editorial style.

Posing as the champion of the modern specialized and curatorial approach to art history, Bode failed to understand that Cruttwell's allegiance to Morelli and Berenson responded also to her desire to use life writing to examine the personality of an old master. It is in this direction that the old master monograph afforded her the opportunity to elaborate on the relationship between life and work in the wake of Pater's aesthetics of style and personality. This was for her a scholarly endeavour, as well as a practice of self-discovery, personal realization, and *Bildung*. As Guercio has explained, the old master monograph provided modern readers with the opportunity to witness the experience of an artist's self-development and project their own (p. 15). Therefore, what to Bode appeared as an

amateurish versatility was, instead, the result of a modern aesthetic project that justified the dissemination of an artistic personality across painting and sculpture, irrespective of the curatorial patrolling of the boundaries of artistic media.

Bode's defence of the rigorous study of art against the frivolity of the commercial art press was not placed in the *Burlington* without good reason; the British magazine was renowned for reaching both the professional and the general audience. Bode did not have to wait long for the British art world to respond to his provocation. In the following issue of the magazine, Sidney Colvin (1845–1927) and Claude Phillips (1846–1924), curators at the British Museum and the Wallace Collection respectively, wrote a joint letter of protest in which they condemned the tone of Bode's attack that was 'not one customary on this side of the North Sea'.⁶⁷ Bode's stance must have reminded them of the other caustic quarrel he had levelled at Morelli on the eve of his death in 1891: 'Why must Berlin criticism continue to exhibit so morbid a sensibility in all controversies wherein it discerns or suspects the influence either of the later Senatore Morelli or of Mr. Berenson?'.⁶⁸ Bode's response only increased the dose of vitriol by mocking their act of 'excessive chivalry' against him for having 'found fault against the book of an English lady'.⁶⁹ Bode insisted that he did not intend to make a personal attack, but only wanted to remind their followers that even Morelli and Berenson stood on the foundations laid by the other camp of connoisseurship, represented by the early work of Joseph Crowe (1825–1896) and Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle (1819–1897), which he was well known to support. While Cruttwell's name disappeared from the impassioned pages of the *Burlington*, it becomes obvious that this diatribe had turned into a gentlemen's affair on the paternity of competing schools of connoisseurship. The review of Cruttwell's scholarship thus developed into another battlefield over which different camps could reignite old feuds.

Although Cruttwell's own voice remained silent in the public arena of the *Burlington*, she made her position known directly to Ottoline Morrell. She obviously found Bode's attack odious: 'It was so stupid too,

⁶⁷ Sidney Colvin and Claude Phillips, 'A New Book on the Pollaiuoli: To the Editor of *The Burlington Magazine*', *Burlington Magazine*, 11 (1907), p. 249. On this acerbic diatribe, see also Michael Levey, 'The Earliest Years of the Burlington Magazine: A Brief Retrospect', *Burlington Magazine*, 128 (1986), 474–77 (p. 475).

⁶⁸ Colvin and Phillips, p. 249. For an interpretation of Bode's attack on Morelli as being addressed to the circles of connoisseurship in England, see Francesco Ventrella, 'Feminine Inscriptions in the Morellian Method: Constance Jocelyn Ffoulkes and the Translation of Connoisseurship', in *Migrating Histories of Art: Self-Translations of a Discipline*, ed. by Maria Teresa Costa and Hans Christian Hönes, Studien aus dem Warburg-Haus, 19 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), pp. 37–57 (p. 51).

⁶⁹ Wilhelm Bode, 'A New Book on the Pollaiuoli: To the Editor of *The Burlington Magazine*', *Burlington Magazine*, 12 (1907), 106–07 (p. 106).

it disgusted me', and she was pleased that Colvin and Phillips 'gave him a good snub'. Then, with her characteristic strength of character, she concluded: 'When I finish my Donatello I mean to write only for journals and try to make some money.'⁷⁰ Published in 1911, her work on Donatello was also her last old master monograph. Instead of abandoning the connoisseurship of sculpture after Bode's criticism, she decided to make an intervention straight into his scholarly domain, as she reported him for wrongly attributing to Donatello two busts from the Bargello (the bust of a youth, also known as Roman emperor, and the 'Vecchio Barbuto').⁷¹

After this publication, Cruttwell seemingly abandoned art history and in 1913 published a semi-autobiographical novel, *Fire and Frost*, which dramatized the lofty personalities that populated the foreign colony of Florence.⁷² In an insightful analysis of the novel, Hilary Fraser has suggested that fiction must have offered Cruttwell

an alternative medium of expression to the more ideologically circumscribed discourse of art history, one that enabled women to rehearse with greater freedom issues relating not only to the gender politics of their profession and the writing of art's histories, but to sexuality, visuality, and intersubjectivity. (*Women Writing*, p. 42)

Nevertheless, Cruttwell never abandoned her interest in historical personalities, as the aesthetic project of the old master monograph seems to have transformed into two biographies, *The Princess des Ursins* (1927) and *Madame de Maintenon* (1930), which tell the interconnected history of two women who achieved considerable power in the courts of Philip V and Louis XIV. Giving up the old masters did not entail quitting the old mistresses. Speaking about these biographies in a letter addressed to Vernon Lee in 1929, Cruttwell commented on the importance that the past lives of others had had for her own life and, now as an old scholar, she had very little patience with the anxieties derived from the world of the connoisseurs that had very little to do with her aesthetic and ethical project:

What a pity one can't live only with people who bring light and beauty into one's life. That hideous Berenson element, pretentious, & false even to the art they pretend to care for,

⁷⁰ BMBP, [June 1907]. Cruttwell also intimates that Eugénie Sellers Strong was behind the whole business.

⁷¹ *Donatello*, pp. 121, 145. Contemporary scholars seem to confirm Cruttwell's caution. See *Omaggio a Donatello, 1386–1986: Donatello e la storia del Museo*, ed. by Paola Barocchi and others (Florence: Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 1985), pp. 280, 336; and Artur Rosenauer, *Donatello* (Milan: Electa, 1993), p. 315.

⁷² Maud Cruttwell, *Fire and Frost* (London: John Lane, 1913). For an analysis of the novel, see Fraser, *Women Writing Art History*, pp. 40–43.

spoil my memories of Florence & I regret all the time I wasted over Morellian rubbish & pouring over folds and drapery & who first discovered this and thieved the idea from that, which has made me detest all those studies. If I have only formed out Mme de Maintenon at that age I would have done something good. As it is (at my age of 70) I have done the best bit of work of my life.⁷³

Cruttwell's career as an old masters scholar represents one illuminating example of the complex strategies by which women were able to create and maintain their professional networks in the art world of connoisseurship. During her lifetime, she found herself involved in many disputes and every time she seems to have reacted with the strength, energy, and independence that she so much admired in her old masters. Although Cruttwell had to negotiate the pressures imposed by commercial publishing, her embrace of the monograph genre represented both a specific historiographical programme about life writing and a philosophical project of self-cultivation. Her endeavours to write about the lives of artistic personalities in the past has also left us a lasting impression of the personality of one art historian at work.

⁷³ Cruttwell to Vernon Lee, 3 December 1929, Waterville, ME, Colby College, Vernon Lee Archive.